

COLORADO

Colorado State Office



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Past to Present: Preserving America's Heritage

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The year was 1906 when President Theodore Roosevelt signed legislation that would revolutionize the preservation of our nation's history. This landmark legislation – the Antiquities Act – made the federal government responsible for safeguarding some of the places and resources that define us as Americans.

For the past hundred years, the Act has helped citizens nationwide protect, appreciate and celebrate the special places and irreplaceable resources found on public lands: archaeological sites, fossils, and natural wonders.

This short, one-page law protects more than just places. It protects our sense of who we are and where our nation came from.

The language of the act takes us back to a time when America was beginning to understand where it stood in the greater scheme of time and place. Our country was young, but we saw ourselves as a nation with a rich and complex legacy. We had antiquities – artifacts, sites, tangible records of human achievements – that were the equal of any in the world. We had objects of scientific curiosity – great canyons, ancient forests, towering mountains. The future-minded legislators of 1906 found a way to recognize these national resources, and to make their study and preservation a national concern.

One hundred years ago, the Act made it unlawful to “appropriate, excavate, injure, or destroy any historic or prehistoric ruin or monument, or any object of antiquity.” It also allowed for the creation of monuments representing “historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest.”



LOWRY RUINS AT THE CANYONS OF THE ANCIENTS NATIONAL MONUMENT.

RICK ATHEARN



Many Americans have visited the places President Roosevelt, and the presidents who followed him, designated as a permanent legacy to the American people. Roosevelt established 18 national monuments; 12 because of their scientific interest, like the very first monument, Devil's Tower, in Wyoming, and six for their historic interest. Of those six original historic monuments, three – El Morro, Chaco Canyon, and Gila Cliff Dwellings – are in New Mexico, and three – Montezuma Castle, Tonto, and Tumacacori – are in Arizona.

Today, there are more than 100 historic or natural monuments across our nation. Our Four Corners country – New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, and Colorado – can proudly count more than 50 monuments within its borders.

Most of us can remember at least one visit to one of these special places. We have pictures in our albums; maps with the push pins marking our travels; and old brochures, souvenirs and memories to remind us of these explorations.

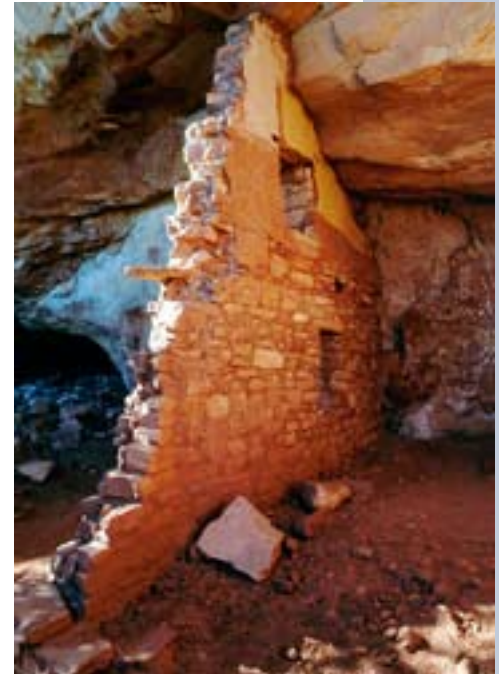
Across the West, the Bureau of Land Management is working to preserve newly established monuments, such as Canyons of the Ancients in Colorado, Agua Fria in Arizona, and the Grand Staircase-Escalante in Utah.

The BLM will be celebrating the 100th birthday of the Antiquities Act across the nation with programs as diverse as marking the Oregon Trail from Idaho to Baker City, Oregon; reclaiming short-cut trails in partnership with the Kokopelli Bike Club in Canyons of the Ancients Monument; recording rock art at Sears Point in southern Arizona; and locating the traces of the Old Spanish Trail across Utah.

Here in Colorado, there is a calendar full of events celebrating the Antiquities Act and instilling a sense of stewardship in visitors. There will be the Block Prints by Everett Rues exhibit as well as a full lecture series at the Anasazi Heritage Center; the McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area and the Museum of Western Colorado will host heritage adventures, furthering community stewardship for area cultural sites. The NCA will also strengthen its partnership with Dinosaur Journey and the Dinosaur Scenic Byway to complete a trail loop and install interpretive signs.

In February the exhibit: Cultural Resources of Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, will open at the Heritage Center. In March, there will be a photographic exhibit of area rock art sites in Monte Vista. Dominguez Canyon Wilderness Study Area and Bridgeport will host an on-site open house and hike showing the BLM's work to provide improved public access to preserve and interpret the area's cultural resources.

During the month of May, the Colorado archaeological community will celebrate Colorado Archaeology and Historic Preservation Month. Many local community events and activities will be available across the state.



A BRICK WALL AT ANASAZI HERITAGE CENTER

ROBERT JENSEN



HISTORIC BUILDING ALONG THE ALPINE LOOP

RICK ATHEARN



The San Luis Valley will host a Colorado Rock Art Association annual meeting in May, including field trips to local rock art sites.

The Kremmling area will welcome visitors in June for an open house at the Burtcher grave site, providing public interpretation of this historical site. In July volunteers will be invited to participate in locating traces of the Old Spanish Trail and associated cultural sites in the San Luis Valley. In August, Kremmling will once again open its doors for a public opportunity to learn about the significance of Independence Mountain.

There will be a centennial celebration along the Alpine Loop in September, held in conjunction with the Red Mountain Task Force's "Red Mountain Days." Local site stewards and volunteers will provide on-site interpretation of this former mining district.

In September there will be numerous events tied to Public Lands Day, including preservation efforts surrounding Irish Canyon's rock art, and an on-site interpretation of the Hanging Flume site in conjunction with Western Colorado Interpretive Association, Uniweep-Tabogauche Scenic Byway Association, and the Rimrocker Historical Society. There will also be an open house at the cretaceous-ammonite site featuring public interpretation of this world-renowned paleontological site near Kremmling.

The BLM will continue to follow the mission of the Antiquities Act: safeguarding the nation's legacy of ruins, archaeological sites, fossils, historic and prehistoric monuments and structures, objects of scientific interest, and historic landmarks on the public lands.

Visitors can join the effort to safeguard America's treasures as well. There is plenty of room on public lands for volunteers of all ages, stewards for our irreplaceable sites, and anyone who believes in loving these resources and leaving them for future generations.

Check out the national website for more information at www.blm.gov/heritage/adventures.



DINOSAUR BONES IN MATRIX AT COLORADO CANYONS NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA